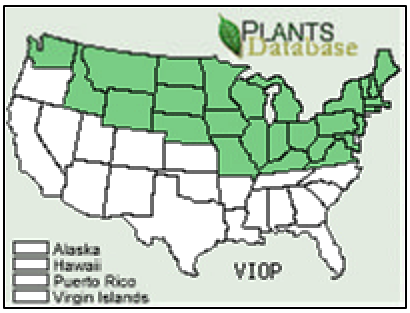
Guelder Rose

Common Names: European Highbush Cranberry, American Cranberry, Cramp Bark, Snowball Tree, Red Elder, Rose Elder
Genus: Viburnum
Species: opulus

Description: The Viburnum opulus is a deciduous shrub in the honey-suckle family.

Height: 7-12' (2.1-3.6 m)
Leaves: 3 1/2" (9 cm) long; palmate lobed, resembling maple leaves; edges coarsely serrated. Leaves turn to a bright red or rich purple before falling
Flowers: white; in 3-4" (7.5-10 cm) wide clusters; inner flowers tiny; outer ring of 5-petaled, 3/4" (2 cm) wide flowers is sterile; inner flowers are fertile and very small providing nectar for the pollinating insects
Fruit: berry, 1/2" (1.2 cm) diameter, bright red, juicy; berries can be used for ink; bright red berries ripen in August attracting birds that spread the seeds; some species are sterile and don't have berries
Bark: Its bark is used as an herbal medicine for cramps and asthma.

Habitat: It is native to the woodlands of the European deciduous forest, north Asia and north Africa. It is found at the edges of woods, hedgerows and marshes. It grows in both heavy clay and acidic soil.



Distribution: In the United States it is found in agricultural zones 3 to 8, a relatively cool climate. See green areas on map.

Ecological Disturbance: The Guelder Rose can be an invasive shrub that takes over native plants areas and spread out for more sunlight.

Control and Management: Viburnum leaf beetle is a natural pest to this species.

- Mechanical Control: pruning or sheering
- Chemical Control: herbicide applications

References: http://plants.usda.gov, www.blueplanetbiomes.org/guelder_rose.htm